

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 05639 161209Z

53

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1999

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5639

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF

SUBJECT: IRAN/IRAQ RELATIONS

REF: TEHRAN 5460

1. I CALLED ON MFA UNDER SECRETARY JAFAR NADIM, WHO
HAD ACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY TO BAGHDAD
THIS PAST WEEK TO ASK HIM HOW HE THOUGHT THE VISIT WENT.
IN OPENING THE CONVERSATION I NOTED TEHRAN PRESS REPORTS
THAT ALL OUTSTANDING ISSUES BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ
HAD NOW BEEN SETTLED. HE QUICKLY REPLIED THAT THIS
WAS NOT THE CASE. HE SAID THAT WITH SETTLEMENT OF
WATER AND LAND BORDER DEFINITIONS AND QUESTIONS RELATING
TO THE KURDS BEHIND THEM, THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE NOW
WORKING ON ANOTHER PACKAGE DEAL WHICH WOULD ADDRESS
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PAGE 02 TEHRAN 05639 161209Z

FOUR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS: (A) NAVIGATION ON THE

SHATT-AL-ARAB; (B) WATER RIGHTS AND USAGE OF RIVERS THAT FLOW BETWEEN ONE COUNTRY AND THE OTHER; (C) THE MANDATE AND OPERATION OF A JOINT BORDER COMMISSION AND (D) PASTURAGE USAGE FOR TRIBES THAT MOVE FROM ONE SIDE OF THE BORDER TO ANOTHER DURING DIFFERENT GRAZING SEASONS. IT WAS AGREED THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD TRY TO HAVE DETAILS OF THIS PACKAGE DEAL WORKED OUT AND READY FOR SIGNATURE WITHIN THREE MONTHS.

2. I ASKED NADIM ABOUT THE PILGRIMAGE ISSUE. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS TO BE DEALT WITH OUTSIDE OF THE AFOREMENTIONED PACKAGE DEAL. THERE WAS SOME DIFFICULT LOGISTIC (AND BY IMPLICATION SECURITY ISSUES) THAT HAD TO BE WORKED OUT AND THIS WAS TO BE HANDLED BY A SEPARATE COMMISSION THAT BOTH COUNTRIES HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO ESTABLISH. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE KINDS OF PROBLEMS THIS COMMISSION WOULD ADDRESS, NADIM SAID IF THE PILGRIMAGE GATES WERE OPEN TWO MILLION IRANIANS WOULD IMMEDIATELY APPLY FOR PASSPORTS TO VISIT HOLY PLACES IN IRAQ. HE SAID THERE WAS NO WAY IRANIAN PASSPORT AND POLICE AUTHORITIES COULD COPE WITH THIS VOLUME IMMEDIATELY. FURTHER HE NOTED THAT THE TWO MAIN HOLY PLACES IN IRAQ, NAJAF AND KERBALA, ARE SMALL TOWNS THAT COULD NOT HANDLE 10,000 PILGRIMS AT BEST. HE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE SOMETIME BEFORE AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED ON THESE KINDS OF QUESTIONS AND THAT THEY WOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE RESOLVED BY THIS AUGUST. (A DATE WE HAD HEARD WERLIER WAS ESTABLISHED FOR THE BEGINNING OF PILGRIMAGE TRAVEL).

3. NOTING THAT THERE HAD BEEN A GOOD DEAL OF SPECULATION IN THE PRESS ABOUT A PERSIAN GULF SECURITY PACT, I ASKED NADIM WHETHER THE MATTER WAS DISCUSSED LAST WEEK IN BAGHDAD. HE SAID THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH THE IRAQI DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ABOUT IT AND THAT KHALATBARY HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH HAMMADI IN A TETE-A-TETE BUT HE DID NOT KNOW THE DETAILS OF THE LATTER CONVERSATION. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT IT WAS AGREED BOTH SIDES WOULD KEEP EACH OTHER INFORMED OF THEIR SOUNDINGS WITH OTHER PERSIAN GULF STATES. IT WAS IRAN'S POSITION THAT ANY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEHRAN 05639 161209Z

SUCH AGREEMENT HAD TO INVOLVE ALL OF THE PERSIAN GULF STATES AND THAT NONE SHOULD BE GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT THE TERMS OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT WERE BEING DICTATED BY ONE PARTY OR ANOTHER. IN THIS CONNECTION HE SAID THAT VERY CAREFUL PREPARATIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BEFORE ANY CONFERENCE OF PERSIAN GULF STATES COULD BE HELD ON THE SUBJECT AND THAT HE THOUGHT THEREFORE SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO OCCUR IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

4. I ASKED HIM HOW THE ATMOSPHERICS WERE IN BAGHDAD.
HE REPLIED WITH A GRIN, FRIENDLY BUT QTE I WOULD BE
LYING IF I SAID THEY WERE VERY FRIENDLY. UNQTE
HE ADDED THAT THE IRAQIS STILL HARBOR DEEP SUSPICIONS
ABOUT IRANIAN MOTIVES AND OBJECTIVES. HE DID NOT SAY
SO BUT WE BELIEVE THE SAME CAN BE SAID OF THE IRANIANS.
MIKLOS

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